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SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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JUNE/JULY 2020

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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

It is the strangest year in our lifetime and likely to continue for many months. We are all adjusting to the total lack of planned events, friends and family meetings and hoping for some light at the end of the rainbow.

The first half of this magazine comprises a series of inspirational village responses to the corona virus outbreak where groups and individuals have displayed a level of compassion for others never seen in the village before. The second half contains a mix of interesting stories and information as well as a few things to do which may engage you. For the first time the magazine AGM was held on Zoom. Edited versions of the reports are in this issue and the full versions appear on our facebook page and website.

The front cover is a photo of the flash mob led by 'Jive with Jess'. It started in Kennylands Road led by Jess, moved to Grove Road and Amanda has led the group in Westleigh Drive. It takes place after the clapping to support the NHS and key workers at 8pm on Thursday evenings and if you fancy getting involved this social Distance is great fun. The steps for the week are on the Active Leaders website. It is hoped that there will be a flash mob dance in every street in Sonning Common by the end of the summer.

The production of the magazine will face the same situation at the beginning of July when I will be collecting articles to include in the next issue. I would be delighted to receive contributions from you, short or long they will be appreciated.

Diana

Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM ...



Diana Pearman



Christine Atkinson



Joan Grummant

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Design & Artwork: Kevin Taplin

TenSevenNine.com
hello@tensevennine.com
07887 902376

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rick@xplor-pm.co.uk
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USEFUL CONTACTS:

Chairman: Geoff Adams
1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD
chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org
Tel 0118 972 2134

Diary dates: Helen Barker
helen.barker75@outlook.com Tel 0118 972 1241

Distribution: Helen Gavin
distribution@sonningcommonmagazine.org
Tel 0118 972 4680

Advertising: John Pearman
advertising@sonningcommonmagazine.org
Tel 0118 972 2381

THE NHS ARMY

I'll tell you a tale, that's been recently written,

Of a powerful army, so Great it saved Britain,

They didn't have bombs and they didn't have planes,

They fought with their hearts and they fought with their brains,

They didn't have bullets, armed just with a mask,

We sent them to war, with one simple task,

To show us the way, to lead and inspire us,

To protect us from harm and fight off the virus,

It couldn't be stopped by our bulletproof vests,

An invisible enemy, invaded our chests,

So we called on our weapon, our soldiers in Blue,

"All Doctors, All Nurses, Your Country needs you"

We clapped on our streets, hearts bursting with pride,

As they went off to war, while we stayed inside,

They struggled at first, as they searched for supplies,

But they stared down the virus, in the whites of its eyes,

They leaped from the trenches and didn't think twice,

Some never came back, the ultimate price,

So tired, so weary, yet still they fought on,

As the virus was beaten and the battle was won,

The many of us, owe so much, to so few,

The brave and the bold, our heroes in Blue,

So let's line the streets and remember our debt,

We love you, our heroes, Lest we forget.

MATT KELLY



A BITTERSWEET SPRING

The terrible trauma The Virus engendered, manifested in frantic flurries of concerned emails combined with cascades of humorous circulations. Man's ingenuity appeared to know no bounds...and yet, as the weeks progressed, these "funnies" became superseded by spiritual/religious/philosophical perspectives which encouraged deep reflection upon one's *raison d'être*.

Circumspection has opened our collective hearts in ways hitherto unimagined; evidence of truly magnanimous acts lightens the burden of fear and suffering, warming our sense of humanity. Ironically, we are drawn closer to our fellows, despite lockdown.

There are many perspectives. I'm blessed to wallow in poignancy; for has Spring ever been this beautiful? Hour-long daily bike rides reveal a feast of vibrant flowers, bees and butterflies; the liberty of "stopping and staring", immeasurable. (Easter Saturday yielded 63 other bikes and almost no vehicles.) Unprecedented!

I've been fortunate to follow religious

services by live-streaming or Zoom. Zoom also offers glimpses into over 70 fellow-choristers' living rooms during our weekly community choir practice. Sometimes haphazard, it is always good fun.

Painful news arrives of a beloved overseas cousin who has died. Also, my dear friend's Mother has died. We cannot attend their funerals. My sister (a Headteacher) and her staff have no PPE, yet their charges are children, potentially bringing infection from their key worker parents. Her London authority cannot advise. ●

IRENKA MOTYKA



"BECAUSE ITS FLAT?"

Corona the virus (do you remember when it was a fizzy soft drink?) is causing much inconvenience and grief.

Inconvenience to those who are sensibly avoiding visiting, visitors, and unnecessary shopping; grief to those who have lost loved ones.

Look for the silver linings! - How many benefits can you list? Less aircraft noise; few con' trails blighting the sky; less motor traffic and its associated noise; reduced pollution in the streets and in the atmosphere in general. More walkers enjoying our lovely countryside; more cyclists - ... - ...

If ever there was a time to "Get on yer bike" this is it! Not only is "One form of exercise a day" a very good reason to dust off your neglected velocipede, but the almost complete absence of motor

traffic has actually increased the pleasure of cycling.

"Because its flat?" - The (incorrect) reason often used to explain why there are more bikes than people in the Netherlands. The real reason? - See the next edition of SC Mag! ●

PAUL W



FISH AND COVID-19

FISH is nothing if not adaptable, transforming almost overnight from a service that transported people to various locations to a service that transported things (shopping/ prescriptions/ medication).

Many FISH volunteers are of an age, or in a state of health, that requires them to stay at home, so they have continued to help the community in other ways, such as calling every one of FISH's current clients to see how they were coping, and to advise them of FISH's new role during the crisis, as well as telling them of other groups that FISH is liaising with, such as SOCO Group and Springwater Church, available to help them. This information is also on the FISH website and has been broadcast on FISH social media sites. From these initial calls FISH drew up a list of clients who wanted a regular phone call and allocated willing volunteers to make those calls.

Unfortunately, most FISH activities have been put on hold. Our beautiful new bus, complete with new logos, has not yet had its maiden run, and our regular FISH Tea is under wraps. However, undaunted, and holding the line with current restrictions, our home visitors are 'visiting' by phone, and new volunteers have sprung up to take the place of those who cannot drive or shop for FISH at present. Sonning Common Parish Council has kindly donated gloves, available for FISH shoppers and drivers to collect from the FISH Office during opening hours, (9.30 - 11.30), to keep them and our clients safe.

FISH has taken on several new drivers, some of whom will only be with us for the duration, and some of whom will stay on. And they are very keen! The list of unfilled bookings for food or perscriptions goes out every day at 12:00 and usually by 12:10 they have been filled. We have cause to be very grateful to our system developer, (Ken Good of Edge Impact), who updated the

system within hours of our contacting him, so we could treat shopping bookings just like driver ones, and send them out daily for our shoppers to pick up.

When we approached our telephone supplier (Voipfone), for an extra telephone line, ten extensions and a 'calling group' so that we could work with SOCO group to take calls from those in need, they provided these immediately, free of charge. Four FISH volunteers now take calls alongside the SOCO group volunteers.

As people were advised to work at home if they could, and in order to maintain social distancing, which would have been impossible in our small office, several office volunteers, a different one on each working day in the week, agreed to work from home, despite the disruption to their home life. This is only possible because of the computer system being web based, and FISH having Voipfone, which works over the internet. Again, Voipfone came up trumps and offered us 5 new calling groups as an easier way of rotating who picks up the calls on a daily basis.

It seems that whatever we ask for a FISH volunteer either has it, can do it, or knows where to get it! There are some examples on the 'Acts of kindness page'..... So, if you need anything to help you get through this difficult time, be it a phone call, some shopping or something as yet undreamt of, please give FISH a call (0118 9723986).

Despite all the stresses and strains caused by COVID-19, donations are still coming in (standing at just over £20,000 at present) to help FISH to buy the old Police Station as a permanent centre for its work in the community. So FISH would like to send a huge "Thank you" to all of those in the Sonning Common area, and beyond, who have given to FISH so generously.

The sense of community is very strong in Sonning Common, and it is wonderful to be part of its support mechanism, working alongside SOCO Group, Springwater Church, and the Parish Council. ●

ANNA WRIGHT



ALWAYS LOOK FOR THE KINDNESS...

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON



In every disaster there will always be those who rise to the need of others. Many people in Sonning Common have done just that over the last couple of months. When the awful reality of what Covid-19 meant to the world, and our village, first started to come into the news Mathew White realised that many people in the village would be in need of help and assistance. And so he set up a facebook page called Soco Corona Virus Support. This was in the middle of March before we all became locked down, and before we all knew how much it would be needed!

The group have organised themselves with Mathew setting up an email address, getting a mobile phone contact number,

connecting with other groups in the village and liaising with FISH and the health centre. A leaflet with all the contact information was produced and distributed to every house in the village, coordinated by Lindsey Tucker and Craig Henderson. Helen Coyne and Fiona Allnutt stepped up to help with managing the phone requests for help, and Carly Hunt organised the Just Giving page for donations to cover food costs to be able to distribute to the vulnerable, raising over £3,000. All this has been achieved with no squabbling, arguing, complaining or disagreements – perhaps they should be running the country!

Helen told us “since the 4th April we have delivered 88 fruit and veg boxes, 28 dry goods boxes and 21 hygiene boxes. A grand total of 137 boxes. Absolutely fantastic, well done to all involved with these. We have received 55 donations towards payment of these boxes, and we have also delivered an unbelievable amount of groceries to people in isolation. Massive thanks to those on the grocery team.”

There have been many acts of kindness during this time, and many volunteers have

helped along the way. One of those was given a spotlight on the facebook page early in May and we have reproduced some of them see pages 10 and 11.

All of the above has been made possible, and helped, by an army of volunteers and generally good citizens of the village. The local pub Hare & Hounds, has been generous with space and donations, and the SOCO Corona Virus Support team would like to thank everyone who has helped in any way.

We, in turn, would like very much to thank them for all they are doing.....THANK YOU especially to Mathew, Hannah, Helen and Fiona. ●



FOOD BANK BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

Through its response to the Coronavirus outbreak, Springwater Church has achieved one of its hopes of becoming better known in the local community.

Fairly early on in the pandemic church members realised that people might need help with providing food. So, a food bank was set up at the church on the Blounts Court Road, offering free food to individuals, couples and families in need.

Thankfully, donations to the food bank are growing alongside demand for its support and it is now helping around 25 families locally. Springwater is working with Sonning Common Primary School, FISH and SoCo Helpers to identify people who might need support. Among the main beneficiaries are families whose children qualify for free school meals.

Pastor Linsey Potter explained: “People can contact us directly if they need support. The food bank has been going very well. We are really grateful to local people, and to Rotherfield Peppard and Sonning Common parish councils, for all their support.

“Neighbours are asking us what we need and some people are donating to the food bank every time they go shopping. Other people give us what they don't need for themselves. What has been lovely is that Springwater is now a neighbour, not a strange place that people go past and wonder about!”

Containers are kept outside the church for receiving food donations, which are then quarantined for three days, before being sorted, packed and distributed by

volunteers. Linsey, a former nurse, manages everything with meticulous attention to detail and food hygiene.

For more information on the food bank and any Springwater activities phone 0118 972 4519 or email contactspringwater@gmail.com ●

ROS VARNES



LOCKDOWN NEWS

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON



Something that I am sure no one ever envisaged was for the whole country to close down, including the schools. Mr Hirst, Headteacher at Sonning Common Primary School, said “I never thought that I would see the day when my school looked like a computer screen but, we are up, running, educating and communicating - thanks to Google Classroom. I am so immensely proud of all of our staff.”

However, the school has still been open to provide a safe place for the children of key workers and any in a vulnerable position and has been making the most of the time to be creative as well as providing learning.

The recycling ethic of the school was shown in the fabulous NHS sign that

the staff and children made from bottle tops and lids to show their thanks to those looking after everyone in hospital.

Children at home were also creating and made some Easter gardens in pots, and then went on a virtual walk from Land's End to John O Groats! Counting the kilometres they walked each day and submitting them on to a website. Encouraging everyone out for their daily exercise.

There are some children at all schools who are entitled to free school meals, and the school ensured that they were still provided by local catering company Kites Kitchen, who provide all the schools

meals in normal circumstances. What started out as hot meals being collected each day, has transformed into weekly boxes which are delivered with dry ingredients, meat, dairy, eggs and a recipe suggestion to make from the contents – bolognese, pasta sauce, garlic bread, brownies, biscuits etc.

Everyone involved at the school has worked hard to try and keep things normal for the children at home, but it will be a new normal when they return to their school surroundings. ●



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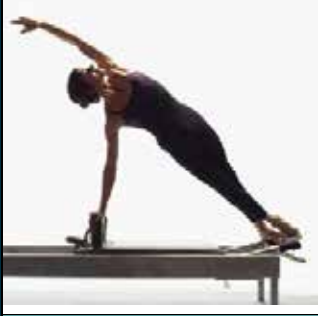
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RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS



FISH volunteers have been busy in other areas as well - recently we had a client phone up with a problem with his fridge - it was turning everything in the fridge to solid ice. A request for a fridge was sent out to all volunteers, and, very speedily, responses poured in from volunteers offering to search and/or suggest various online sites for cheap fridges. Before long though, a noble volunteer offered a fridge that they were using to keep drinks cold, for free!

An 'all volunteers' email soliciting the loan of audio books on cassette or CD for a client whose eyesight isn't up to reading any longer, appears to have prompted people to go up into their lofts and cupboards to dig these out. FISH has been offered an eclectic mix from Dylan Thomas' Under Milkwood through Jerome K Jerome's Three Men in a Boat to Charles Dickens and other classics. FISH volunteers are, of course, observing social distancing guidelines and disinfecting items given or lent.



A printing company in Slough produced a Lockdown Mind Therapy booklet to distribute free via their local Parish Councils. 500 copies were delivered to Sonning Common, FISH delivered 300 and the rest 100 each, went via the SoCo helpers and the Food Bank. 20 residents took the trouble to phone FISH to say how lovely to receive the Mind Therapy book and how much it was appreciated.

Another of our volunteers got in touch with Sonning Welfare and Educational Trust, which generously gave a grant to replace a cooker that was giving electric shocks - and one of FISH's new volunteers checked the client's electrics and installed the new cooker.

A client's lawn needed mowing - we were swamped with volunteers offering to do it. One keen young volunteer went up that very afternoon and mowed the lawn while the sun still shone.

The Soco Corona Virus Support Team arranged a group of volunteers to be prescription collectors for those who are shielding and isolating - the Soco Pharmacy Group. Each night Helen emails Day Lewis Chemist who kindly pull together all the prescriptions on the list and a volunteer collects from the chemist and distributes during the afternoon - a truly life saving service.



Another story of huge kindness was when one lady was shopping in the Co-op and her card was refused. The lady behind her in the queue immediately offered to pay for the shopping without any hesitation! They have since been in contact.

Editor - the company intends to issue Book 2 - any suggestions for the next one please phone me 972 2381 or 0770 223 7956 or email the editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org



Local bakers have been donating cakes for the food boxes.



Vicki Matthews has completed and distributed 23 pamper packs for the staff at Royal Berkshire Hospital from donations.

Do the residents of Sonning Common wish to continue with this fantastic Community First Responder (CFR) Service?

Parking within Elm Court has become impossible during the lockdown with most people and their cars at home. A space needed to be guaranteed to be able to drive out in the necessary short time when responding to the most serious 999 calls.

A special thank you needs to be given to our Health Centre, Pharmacy and Pet Shop as well as to Sharona at Heath and Watkins, especially her plants for our gardens. What a bonus this has proved to be!



Hannah Staples and Fiona Allnutt became Easter bunnies for a day when they helped deliver Easter eggs to families in the village over the warm weekend - many thanks to them! And to Lara Thorpe for donating bunches of flowers for Easter.



Thanks, must also be given to FISH and SOCOHELPERS for providing support and practical help to all those that needed it and Carol Johnson for making face masks. The WI has been encouraging crafts at a very difficult and lonely time. What a fantastic village we live in! When we get back to 'normal opening hours' let us hope we remember this support from our local shops. Let us ensure we stay a strong community supporting each other.

I leafleted the houses in Elm Court and a few in Lea Road and within half an hour we had been offered three drives to park on and a garage. The Parish Council has also given permission for the CFR vehicle to park in front of the Lea Road play area until that re-opens. So now we have five possible parking places so hopefully this will not again be a problem during lockdown. Thank you.

Chris Brook
First Responder organiser

'Magdalena Basinska moved to the village in 2013 with her husband and 2 daughters. She usually works in a local nursery but once that was closed she wanted to help those in need. She explained that it has been hard for her children not to see friends or grandparents, and when they had to self isolate with her daughter they were very grateful for the support from the SoCo helpers group.'



WITH LOVE FROM ELLIE



It's a strange world we are living in but one of the good and positive things is the way that communities are bonding together. Sonning Common has always had a vibrant community spirit but no more so, than now and one little girl exemplifies this.

Her name is Ellie Newman and she and her mother and brother and sister are our next door neighbours.

My husband I began our lockdown on Thursday 19 March and on the following Sunday I opened the front door to find a little box with two fairy cakes covered in sprinkles and a card saying "with love from Ellie".

I thanked her via our newly set up Birch Close app and then discovered that all 28 houses in the close had received a similar surprise.

The next Sunday we received a story written by Ellie. The following week a word search, not taken from the internet but researched and written by her containing joyful, positive and hopeful words.

The following Sunday we were given a little tablet of homemade soap with a motif on the front. Ellie had green hands for days after that.

Week 6 it was a hand drawn picture to colour in with a first, second and third prize certificate for the best colouring (I got third prize but I think Ellie was being very kind as I only possessed three different coloured felt pens). I asked Ellie yesterday how she has thought of this idea and she said, "I know that there aren't many children in our close and that most people were quite old and might be missing their grandchildren so I thought I would like to do something to make them happy".

I was worried that our lockdown might continue for many weeks and months and asked if she intended to stop the Sunday surprises when her school reopens.

Her answer was "No I have lots more ideas"

On week 7 Ellie found 28 stones in her garden, washed them all and painted them, then delivered to 28 houses. The stone has movable eyes, hair and comes with a note which says "a free hug from Ellie." Yesterday, 10 May it was hand made biscuits with an iced balloon decoration.

I know that it has given Ellie, her sister Lyla and her little brother Fred and Mum Kelly so much pleasure and fun to make these gifts but I don't think they realise just how much pleasure and joy they have given to us.

We have already talked about having a street party when we are allowed and I think Ellie and her family should be the guests of honour. ●

Chrissie Godfrey



STOP PRESS ... THE WAY FORWARD FROM SOCO HELPERS

Things are returning to normal – there is the possibility of football back on our TVs from Germany this week! We are not saying the hard work is done, we are saying demand for support has reduced to a manageable level for FISH and the Food Bank to take back full responsibility. Both FISH and The Food Bank agree.

Therefore, our plan is as follows;

- Our last food box run will happen on week commencing Monday 25 May. All future requests for food box support will be taken care of by the Springwater Food Bank.
- Our last grocery run will be Friday 2 May. Any future requests for

individual grocery requests will be taken care of by FISH volunteers.

- Our last prescription run will be Friday 12 June. Any future requests for help will be taken care of by FISH volunteers.

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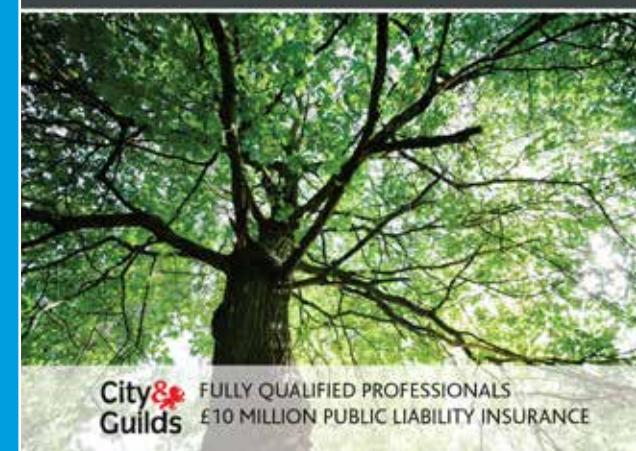
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EASTER FUN

Despite the enforced Lockdown rulings, Easter Fun still proved to be a huge success for children not only in Sonning Common, but also further afield in the UK and internationally!

Originally, due to take place at Kidmore End Memorial Hall field the announcement regarding Lockdown meant an alternative-but equally exciting- plan was required!

So fifteen days of Easter Fun was launched online, and locals and people from 10 different countries viewed it.

Activities were suggested each day – 50 craft packs and cards were also provided to assist and help stimulate ideas for the set tasks.

PHYSICAL: '5-a-day' Fitness Challenges; Fun back garden games; The Ninja Challenge and Human Hungry Hippos!

CREATIVE: Make a hedgehog house; button air hockey table; create egg box animals and create your own Easter Egg Hunt.

INVESTIGATION: Make your own: Lava lamp; kite; sun dial; wind vane and glider.

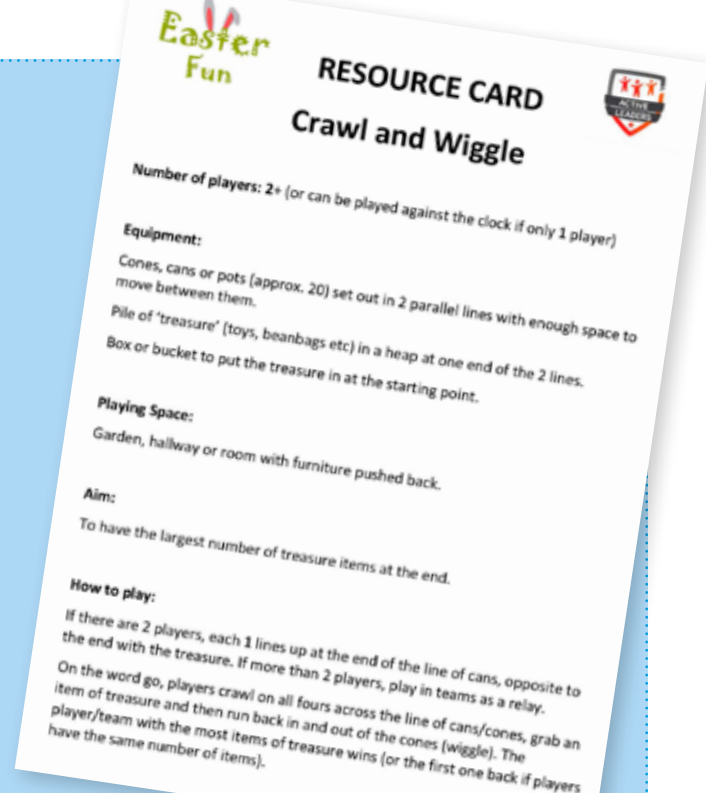
The activities were enthusiastically received by youngsters, and adults!, who eagerly sent us photos of their ingenious artistic creations!

Parachuting rubber ducks; a cardboard mini golf course; clothes peg Easter chicks and 'Moss Man' were just some of the home-based examples we saw.

A huge thank you to Sonning Common Parish Council and the National Lottery for their support, and thank you also to Magda Basinska who provided daily tutorials on her 'Crafty-Rafty' Facebook page of the arts and crafts activities on offer.

Active Leaders will continue to keep you active, fit and entertained. Check out our website www.activeleaders.co.uk and Active Leader Facebook page for daily challenges and fun games, information on 'Jive with Jess!', On the Move in May and Summer Fun. ●

Amanda Watkins-Cooke



FROM NORMAL TO ??

I wrote my last piece for the Sonning Common magazine when the world seemed so much more normal. At that point we were still planning for the final dash to the line for Year 11, we were still working hard with our recruitment for Year 7 in September and beyond and we were still running a conventional school.

Within a few days after the February half-term restart, with global mortality figures looming ever larger, it was clear we needed to start our plans for shutting down and running a virtual school. Nevertheless, it was still a shock on Wednesday 18 March at just after 5pm, with around 10 members of staff crammed into Miss Bliss' office, as we watched the live feed of Gavin Williamson's statement. Suddenly, everything was real... Fortunately, the staff had already come together and put the school first. I only had one member of staff absent across that final week; we were blessed, as other schools were sending year groups home or collapsing classes and lessons, we were able to maintain conventional learning until the closedown. The students had also been brilliant across the week and we had spoken to them as year groups and tutor groups on regular occasions as well as keeping parents informed of what was

occurring. I am also incredibly grateful for the way the staff team came together to deliver laptops to our students without home technology, set everyone up with passwords for Google Classroom, got Tesco vouchers for our Free School Meal students, distributed sanitary towels and tampons to our most economically vulnerable families and mutually supported each other to make sure we were all OK!

One thing that was really pressing was to ensure our Year 11 students did get a send off and a final day. The school has been through a real journey in the last few years and these Year 11 students have probably felt the brunt of it. There was an incredibly strong desire amongst the staff to make sure we 'honoured' the students and let them enjoy that fond farewell. We did our best and put together a lovely final assembly and allowed the students their fond farewells. We know it was appreciated and I'm glad we were able to do such a thing for a group of lovely and talented young people. This talent was underlined with the nomination of the Year 11 rugby team for the Oxfordshire Schools Team of the Year award to be held later this year. A league winning season despite only have just over 20



boys in the year group says a lot about their talent, teamwork and commitment to the school.

Since the shutdown we have relocated our key worker and vulnerable student provision to Maiden Erleigh School in Reading. One of the advantages of being in the Maiden Erleigh Trust is the sharing of resources and this has worked really well. However, we have also lent our minibus to the Sonning Common community for the delivery of food for the vulnerable as well as donating our stock of PPE to the Sonning Common Health Centre and Emmer Green Health Centre. Do please get in contact if the school and its resources can in any way be of further assistance during this period of lockdown. In the meantime, please look after each other and fingers crossed within a few months I can be writing about some real achievements and accomplishments and communicating about the next stages of the Maiden Erleigh Chiltern Edge's renaissance.

ANDY HARTLEY
Headteacher



THE CHERRY TREE PUB, STOKE ROW TRACTOR IN THE GARDEN

It's time to reveal the winner of the 'Naming the Tractor' competition!!

There's been some absolutely fabulous names put forward, so thank you all very much for your suggestions!

It's taken a while to choose the name we felt was the best, and the winner is Harry and Amelie Turnbull for putting forward 'Jonny', after the wonderful man who sadly passed away late last year. Jonny was a familiar face on his tractor, towing his trailer full of people with his straw hat!

We miss him greatly, so it's an absolute honour to name our orange Nuffield tractor in memory of him. ●



VILLAGE QUIZ 2020

Many thanks to everyone who took part in this year's Village Quiz. Understandably, there were fewer teams than usual – eleven teams in total. The Headteacher, Mr Hirst was happy for the quiz to go ahead and hand sanitiser etc was provided. The quiz took place on March 17th, well before the national lockdown was announced but players naturally had some health concerns. The winners were Two Hoots for the second year running. (Leigh and Sue Rawlins, Alison and Jeremy Smith, Katherine Lamprell and Maddie Smith) took home the trophy and a unique 'winning quizzier' bookmark each. By supporting the quiz, the bar and the raffle over £350 was raised for school funds. Here's hoping everyone will want to take part again next year in hopefully, happier and healthier circumstances! ●

Mel White

LOCAL WALKS ... WITH A WATERING HOLE THROWN IN!

By **CHRISTINE ATKINSON**



What could be better when the weather is dry, than a circular walk in our beautiful local countryside.

We have always enjoyed a good walk and are trying to instil the benefits into our three children. They are not always so keen as us, but we have found in the past couple of years, that if there is the promise of dinner in a pub at the end, they will often join us. Obviously in these strange times of lockdown and social distancing we have to have the said drink and dinner at home, but we are all lucky enough to be able to do a couple of these walks from home instead, or within a short drive combined with shopping perhaps. The last few weeks have shown us how much there is to appreciate in our local area, and how fortunate we are to live in the countryside.

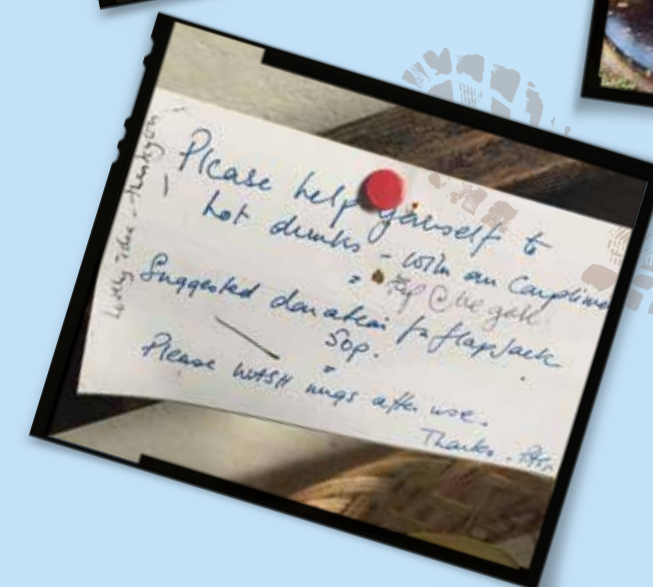
The website that we use for these walks is Brakspear Pub Trails. They all have a choice of 3 routes to choose from, some are only a couple of miles, and some up to 7 miles, which means we have been able to take a packed lunch and make a longer day of it. None of the pubs have been open for a couple of months now, but I am sure parking in the car parks, or near to, is ok. Most of them are within a few miles from Sonning Common, and of course a few are right on the doorstep – Unicorn, New Inn, Maltsters and more.

The first one we tried in the depths of long, dark January 2019 starts from the Rising Sun in Witheridge Hill near Stoke Row. We chose to try Route 1 which takes you across the main B481 and into a wooded path towards Shepherds Green. Each route is colour coded on the map and has a

description to go along with it. One of the more memorable last year was the Fox and Hounds in Christmas Common on a beautiful sunny, but cold, snowy morning. The views across the valley to Watlington and beyond is fantastic.

We tried to do one every Saturday and the routes have given us many wonderful views, found some interesting sights, lovely woodland and very few people! So perfect for a lockdown.....

This winter we had been going to those around Henley which have taken us along the river a bit more and even across to Wargrave. For now the trips are limited to shorter walks and no pub dinner, but we look forward to the times that we can end in a cosy bar and perhaps a pint! ●



HEALTH WALK NEWS

The Health Walks have been suspended during the current crisis – such a shame when the bluebells have been so beautiful and we've had such lovely weather, but I hope you've managed to enjoy both on your own

We'll keep the website updated with news of when we'll be starting again:

www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk

Stay safe – and keep walking!

If you'd like some local routes to try go to: www.walkinginengland.co.uk and look under both Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Sonning Common unfortunately isn't listed, but both Peppard Common and Gallowstree Common are. ●

SONNING COMMON EXPLORERS

30 walks ranging from 1.09mi to 11.9mi

Explorers' Walks around Sonning Common has been printed and is available for collection free from the gate at 24 Kennylands Road – donations would be welcome for Summer Fun for the children.

www.activeleaders.co.uk/sonningcommonexplorers/



TIME TO CARE FOR YOUR HEDGEHOGS



I care about hedgehogs because I was brought up on Beatrix Potter stories and I especially liked Mrs Tiggywinkle and her tidy ways. There used to be lots of them about but in recent years their population has dropped by over 80% which is really worrying. Many are killed on the roads where they are quite hard to see in the dark. Around here many are also killed by badgers. A hedgehog curls up into a ball when frightened which protects them from dogs, cats and foxes but a badger will just pull them open and eat them alive leaving only the skin and prickles. The poor hedgehog usually gets to scream once as the badger bites into its belly parts!

If you have a garden please start helping the local hedgehogs. These delightful little creatures only do good in your garden by eating beetles, slugs, caterpillars, earwigs and millipedes and other insects so they deserve your thanks for that.

You can do three things to help your local Tiggywinkles. First, make it easier for them to roam through local gardens. On an average night a hedgehog will roam for up to two miles so, unless you have a huge estate, they have to risk the roads. Protect them by making

your garden part of an off the road Hedgehog Highway. Cut 13cm diameter holes in all your fences - too small for cats, foxes and badgers but spot on for Tiggys. Then you have done all that you can and then get your neighbours to do the same.

Second, feed them. At its simplest you can leave out small dishes of food and water at dusk throughout the summer and autumn. You can use cat or dog food but what is best for them is specially formulated hedgehog food. I buy mine from Pet Country Supplies on Wood Lane where they sell two varieties - one is dry pellets and the other semi-moist ones. I use both and by mixing them in a bowl I can tell you that they will pick out all the semi-moist pellets before eating any of the dry ones!

Leaving food in the open means that it will often be taken by cats, foxes and corvids so ideally it needs protection from them as well as from the weather.



For a long time I used 110mm soil-pipe bends - my picture shows one in use. Annoyingly, these pipes are of a size that the occasional cat can get its head stuck inside - I regularly found them abandoned all over my garden having clearly been shaken off. That ended last autumn when the heavy bend pictured actually disappeared completely leaving us to wonder what cat managed to jump over a six-foot fence and run away 'wearing' it.

Since then I have designed and made a two-hedgehog feeding station using scrap timber. The result is as shown in the pictures - impenetrable by anything bigger than a hedgehog and needing two hands to lift it. In front of it can be seen what we call a 'thank you pooh' which is often left for us to clear away! I am now making a couple more for the family.

Third, make some weatherproof hibernation places in suitable corners of your garden. A nice pile of dry leaves in safe and sheltered corner will be appreciated but you can go further and make a real shelter - there are plenty of designs on the internet.

Please help these beautiful but very threatened creatures to gain the weight they need for breeding and then to survive next winter safely. With luck you will never hear one screaming and Sonning Common will become Hedgehog Central. ●

Philip Collings



TOM FORT BOOK

My new book - Casting Shadows: Fish and Fishing in Britain - was published a few days after the announcement of lockdown and the closure of all the bookshops in the country. I am trying to be philosophical about what you might say was a piece of spectacularly bad timing, but if you happen to spot me on my bike - my main source of pleasure in these dark times - please do NOT ask me how sales are going!

The book, which took three years to research, write and get edited and into print, is the result of a lifelong fascination with our freshwater fish, and my passion for trying to catch them. I would like to stress that it is emphatically not an angling book -

although there is a good deal of angling in it - but more a social history of the relationship between us humans and these creatures of our rivers and lakes.

But I can't disguise the fact that it is about fish. Cold, scaly, unblinking, distinctly uncuddly fish. You'll probably say why would anyone be interested in them? My challenge has been to try to change that perception - to promote an awareness that all around us, in virtually every significant piece of fresh water, is an amazing and beautiful and endlessly fascinating natural world, which operates out of sight, almost in secret.

I won't bang on about it. Just take my word for it!

The book is published by William Collins, costs £20, and you can get it from Amazon, Waterstones.com and other online outlets. And should you take the plunge and get it, I would be happy to sign it if you drop it round at my house in Wood Lane. ●



NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

As the libraries have been closed no library fines will be charged - so you can keep re-reading the books you chose on your last visit (I hope they were good ones!)

The library service has increased the eBooks and eAudio, which are now all listed on the catalogue. You'll need the 9-digit number (barcode) from your library card and your PIN to log on. (If you've forgotten your PIN, just click on 'Forgot your PIN?' and you'll be sent a link to reset it)

The 2 main Apps for borrowing eBooks are Libby and Borrowbox, which can be downloaded for free.

If you're not a library member you can join online quite easily - a lot of people have done this since the lockdown started.

But there are so many other things you can do online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries - and all for free!

Do you want to read magazines? Have a look at these:

- **Press Reader:** provides over 6,000 publications from over 100 countries in 60+ languages.
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Follow us on Twitter or Facebook if you use social media. Social media is one of the key ways we are engaging with our customers, and with our libraries closed we are looking for online 'visits' instead!

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE 2020 'SILLY SQUAD'

The 2020 theme is 'Silly Squad': a celebration of funny books, happiness and laughter, featuring artwork from award-winning children's author and illustrator Laura Ellen Anderson.

The new online offer will engage and inspire young readers and their families throughout the summer. The plan is to extend the length of the Summer Reading Challenge by a few weeks either side of the usual school holiday but dates are yet to be confirmed. Do make sure you follow us on social media and check our website for more news as we get it at: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries
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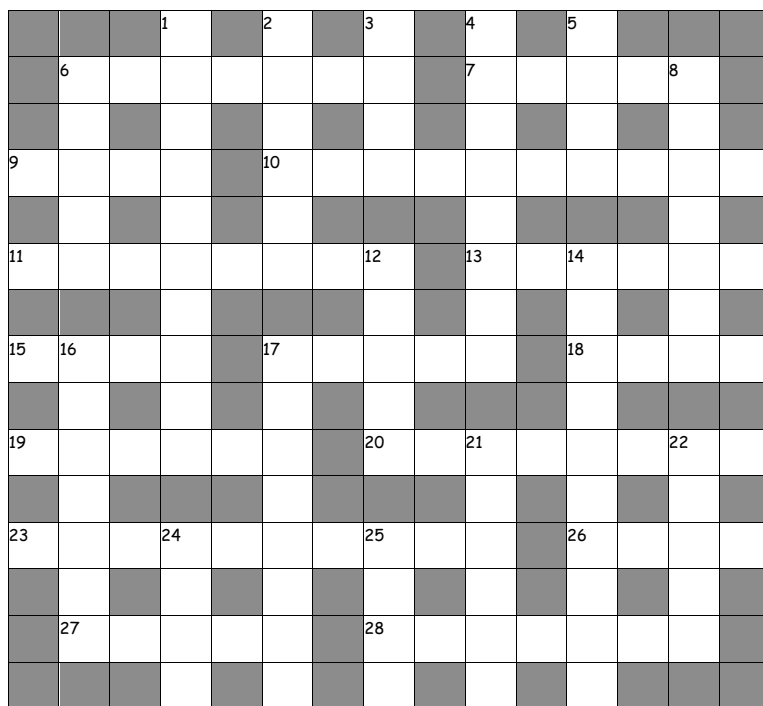
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Jenny Ward 0118 9724542

PUZZLE PAGE 1

By SHEILA WALKER

WOMBAT 2



ACROSS

- 6 So great to have somewhere to put things (7)
 7 between, or six feet under? (5)
 9 Eric makes supper (4)
 10 Artist cleans up after working? (3,3,4)
 11 Could be alternative to 9 (8)
 13 Preserve with 19 (6)
 15 9 in liquid form (4)
 17 See 6D (5)
 18 Animal of French royal stock (4)
 19 See 6D and 13 (6)
 20 See 6D (8)
 23 Vegetables owl uses as small arms (10)
 26 Result of too much 6D? (4)
 27 ... and the same again (5)
 28 Heard vegetable was overcooked (7)

DOWN

- 1 Premonition this is food binge - right! (10)
 2 I turn up for drowsy food (6)
 3 Alternative to daffodil (4)
 4 See 6D (8)
 5 Possible way of dealing with 3,14, 6D, maybe 18 (4)
 6 Girls add excitement to life in the kitchen (5)
 8 French 9 and fish could well make this (7)
 12 Concede entry (5)
 14 Group dispensed with hot chilli (3,7)
 16 See 6D (7)
 17 See 6D (8)
 21 Confused reader may need to (6)
 22 Irritated, a thousand ride around (5)
 24 At least six games for these (4)
 25 All this snack food - take it in! (4)

ADDITIONAL PUZZLES

HOW MANY WORDS....

How many words of 4 or more letters can you make from

CATAclysm?

There should be at least 17. If allowed proper names, what nationality could you find?

CALL MY BLUFF

What is....

1 GREIGE

- (a) light brownish-grey colour
 (b) unbleached cloth
 (c) fallow land

2 GLORK

- (a) a type of small robot
 (b) Slovenian cherry liqueur
 (c) a computer glitch

3 MUSER

- (a) a fully trained husky
 (b) a cabbie who owns his cab
 (c) slops fed to pigs

TICS....

Can you find a 6-letter word ending in -tic for the following:

- * very cold
 * ancient Briton
 * digestive
 * milky
 * frantic
 * mediterranean sea
 * rotting
 * resin
 * makes you sick
 * rural

MEET JOHN MERRICK

NEWEST RECRUIT TO SONNING COMMON FIRST RESPONDERS

By JOAN GRUMMANT



The newest and most welcome member of the Community First Responders Team in Sonning Common is John Merrick, a long-time resident of thirty-five years. After retiring John joined the Community First Responders in 2019 and was able to fill up the team rota by covering the first part of the week thus enabling it to provide a very comprehensive service for seven days a week. He had previously volunteered with the St John's Ambulance Service attending various large-scale events including football matches. He also still volunteers as a lock keeper during the summer months.

The Community First Responders provide a vital service and are often on the scene of an emergency before ambulance crews in nearly 80% of cases. These vital extra minutes can be hugely significant. John was very

impressed by the volume and detail of the training he received and also by the fact that it is ongoing and regularly updated and each responder is re tested every six months. When he is on duty, he uses the Community First Responder car, which you may have seen with its distinctive orange and green livery. On arriving at the scene of a call he performs basic checks including oxygen levels, pulse, breathing rate, temperature, blood pressure and blood sugar levels. If a stroke is suspected a FAST test is performed. This information starts to give an indication of what the problem may be and gives paramedics valuable information to work with upon arrival. The car is also equipped with a defibrillator and a lifting cushion that enables people who are unable to get up after falling, to be safely lifted up off the floor.

The Community First Responders never know what to expect when a call is answered. They attend a huge variety of calls and most are to people in their homes but sometimes it is to those who have been taken ill or fallen

in public places. The age range of the callers is vast-from 10 days to 105 years! The service is obviously playing a vital role in supporting a beleaguered NHS and providing that layer of community support so important to us all.

We are extremely lucky to have volunteers like the Community First Responders and the fact that they work so closely as a cohesive team can make us all thankful for their presence. Community First Responders are not funded by the ambulance service. They are responsible for raising the money to purchase additional equipment and also to maintain their car. They are extremely grateful to the many people in and around Sonning Common who continue to raise money and support their work. They make Sonning Common a much safer place and deserve the heartfelt thanks and support of the whole community.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Community First Responders please e mail info@sonningcommonfirstresponders.co.uk



See answers on page 25

WILLIAM LAUD

from Reading to the See of Canterbury



In October 1573, somewhere around what is now Queen Victoria Street in Reading, a baby boy was born to William Laud and his wife Lucy. Laud, a clothier, named his son after himself, and might well have hoped that if the child survived to adulthood he would make something of himself beyond Reading's cramped sixteenth-century streets. The town's Thames-side location and proximity to wool-producing districts had made it a thriving hub for cloth-making; it was known also for its abbey, founded by Henry I in the twelfth century and becoming by the fourteenth one of the richest institutions in England. However, in 1539 it was 'dissolved' as part of Henry VIII's break with Rome, the abbey estate pillaged and its physical structures demolished.

We cannot know William Laud senior's religious sentiments, or whether he passed any overt religiosity to his son. However, in 1589, once William junior had completed his initial education at Reading School, he enrolled at St John's College at Oxford, founded in 1555 with the aim of producing priests; this choice suggests Laud already had a deep interest in theology. At the time of its founding – coincidentally by another Reading man, Thomas White – the college

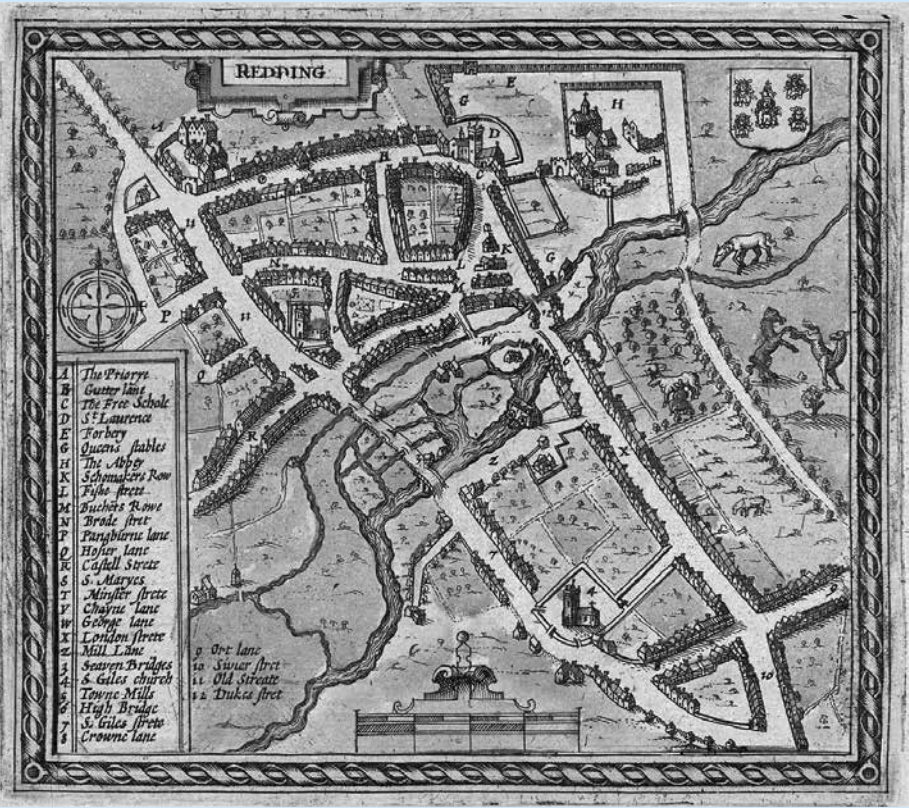
favoured Catholicism, but by 1574 had conformed to the new 'English' church. Its now Protestant instruction seems to have been 'high church', however – that is, retaining ritual elements associated with Catholicism – as the hallmark of Laud's later theological career was his rejection of key early Protestant doctrines that had distinguished the Reformation. This marked him out to many, as a danger to England's Reformation itself.

After becoming a Doctor of Divinity in 1608, Laud's rise was unstoppable. Between then and 1628 he became successively Dean of Gloucester, chaplain to court favourite the Duke of Buckingham, Bishop of St Davids, Bishop of Bath and Wells, a privy councillor, and then Bishop of London. Finally in 1633 he reached the pinnacle of church government: appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury.

The intricacies of Laud's policies, their intimate connection to Charles I's reign, and the causes for both men's

subsequent executions, must be left to full-length works. Suffice to say that Laud's determination to impose his reforms on the English Church (inflaming fears of a return to Catholicism), his support for the King's 'royal prerogative' (the monarch's right to complete authority and immunity), and the harsh punishments meted out to his opponents (ear cropping, branding, imprisonment), created innumerable enemies and led to his arrest in 1640 on the specious charge of treason. Once in custody he languished in the Tower, being brought to trial only in spring 1644. Despite lengthy deliberations, Parliament could not find a suitable point of law to carry the treason charge, and eventually passed a bill of attainder which simply declared Laud guilty without the necessity of a trial. Reading's most famous son was beheaded on Tower Hill on 10 January 1645, aged 71, and buried in the chapel at St John's, Oxford. ●

Serena Jones



ABOVE: John Speed's Map of Reading, 1611

TOP: William Laud, engraved by Wenceslaus Hollar

COOK'S CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

Everyone will have stories to tell of compassion, kindness and community spirit, showcasing the stoicism and 'stiff upper lip' attitude that Britain is renowned for. As we hopefully head towards the end of an unprecedented time in world history let's celebrate all things British!



QUICK AND EASY TOMATO SOUP – serves 6

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, cut into pieces
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 1/2 tablespoons plain flour, to thicken
- 2 (400g) tins peeled tomatoes*
- 750ml chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- salt and pepper, to taste
- freshly chopped chives



Heat oil and butter in a large pot. Add onion and stir until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and 1 1/2 tablespoons plain flour. Add tomatoes* and chicken stock; bring to the boil. Simmer for 15 minutes. Season to taste with sugar, salt and pepper. Blend if required. Sprinkle with the chopped chives.

*can be substituted if you have a surplus of really ripe tomatoes
Puree in a blender and return to pot.
Garnish with freshly chopped chives and serve.

HOME MADE FISH, CHIPS AND MUSHY PEAS – serves 4

- 250g plain flour
- 375ml lager or ale
- 900g haddock fillets, cut into 170g pieces
- sea salt and white pepper
- Preheat deep fat fryer to 180 degrees C.

FISH

Whisk together 3/4 of the flour and the beer until thoroughly mixed. Dust the fish pieces in remaining flour (shaking off excess), then dip in batter, covering completely. Drop fish in oil, working in batches. Fry until golden brown on both sides. drain thoroughly on kitchen paper, then salt and pepper to taste. If not preparing the chips at the same time, then keep warm in oven while preparing chips.

CHIPS

Preheat the fryer containing vegetable oil to 160 degrees C. 8 large potatoes, peeled and cut into chips about as thick as your index finger. Allow chips to sit in water with a small amount of vinegar or lemon juice while you prepare the fryer.

In batches, drain the potatoes of water completely, then lower in the fat, shaking often. Cook for 10 minutes. Repeat until all the potatoes are done. Let the potatoes drain as you heat the fat to 190 degrees C.

Working in batches, return them to the fryer for 3-4 minutes, or until golden and crisp. Allow to drain, then add salt and vinegar to taste.

MUSHY PEAS

- 300g frozen peas
- 4 tablespoons double cream
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Bring a shallow pot of lightly salted water to the boil over medium high heat. Add frozen peas, and cook for 3 minutes, or until tender. Drain peas, and transfer to a blender or large food processor. Add cream, butter, salt and pepper to peas, and process until blended, but still thick with small pieces of peas. Adjust seasonings to taste and serve immediately.



PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 22

TICS:
arctic
Celtic
peptic
lactic
hectic
Baltic
septic
mastic
ermetic
rustic

HOW MANY WORDS:
Nationality: Malay
CALL MY BLUFF:
lb, 2c, 3b

Y	A	A	Y	D	R	T	E
G	N	I	G	R	A	N	E
R	C	K	E	T	T	O	C
E	T	A	O	I	V	R	O
N	C	O	O	O	E	N	T
E	A	C	F	E	L	O	V
		L			A	C	A
Y	A	R	B	I	L	C	I
A	D	A	L		A		
D	E	U	N	D	A	W	H
S	I	F	O	F	A	A	A
R	E	R	I	F	A	R	Y
U	C	A	L	L	N	W	
H	A	E	N	A	S	I	A
T	H	C	H	W	Z	C	S

WOMBAT 2

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LET'S CALL HIM FRED

LEAD – Suppose you wanted some. No not Lead as in Dog Lead, or Lead up the Garden Path. Not even Pencil Lead (which as we all know has not been actual Lead since Pontius was a pilot, or soon after).

We're talking Lead as in Heavy Metal (but not that genre of music). This time we're seeking Lead for ballast in a sailing dinghy. Where can we buy some at a sensible price in these Covid-constrained conditions? What we want is Pb (remember those chemistry lessons?) ... only a small quantity, to melt down and cast into the required space in the boat. We want Lead as was once commonly used by plumbers and roofers – Aha! PING.

Lateral thinking! - Builders' Merchants might still sell it in rolls for roofing and such. (They call it flashing.)

So, on the phone PDQ. "Do you have any Lead flashing, and what does it cost?"

No joy. Local suppliers are all either Covid-closed or want £100 min order for delivery – "Collection not allowed".

Internet to the rescue? eBay nearly came up trumps. Someone is selling Lead buckles ... yes, Lead Buckles! "Who'd want a Lead buckle?" I can almost hear you ask – Well scuba divers use them to be zero-buoyant – It stops them going up when they want to go down. Anyway, this chap has some at a decent price and will have it delivered.

I email; "Is it actually Lead?" "Oh yes, I cast it myself from Lead flashing." "OK. Can you just sell me some flashing and reduce the price?" "Sorry, I'm out of stock of flashing and can't get any due to" (Covid again – grrr!)

Oh, but then my nearest and dearest pipes up with "How about Martin?" (He lives nearby, makes splendid bespoke gates and fencing (and sometimes gives me jolly decent free range eggs.) But I wonder, why would Martin have Lead? Still, "Any port in a storm".

So, back to the phone to explain the unlikely reason for wanting some scrap

Lead, and might he just have some. (Expecting a "No" of course.)

"My granddad gave me a weight," says he, adding "Used it on his boat to stop it moving." Could it be what sailors call a "mud weight" perhaps?

It's raining, so heavy-footed I trudge round to have a look. Nobody in sight. "It's on the back of the truck," (says a disembodied voice). And so it is. Like an upturned Christmas Pudding, about 6" high, and similar of diameter, with a rusty eyebolt in the top. It IS a mud weight!

"How about this?" says the now visible Martin appearing from behind a heap of scrap, clutching a sinuous length of old water pipe. – Looks good to me.

Added to which he then gives me a 500 gm pot of Cascamite. (That's weatherproof wood glue stronger than wood – Boat-builders used it till someone convinced them epoxy was better – But that is, or could be a different story). Why is he offering me this? It seems to be empty, though it rattles a little. Strange, there's 15 quid in it – A tanner and a fiver. I was all set to offer him a tanner for the Lead, and he wants to give me £15. Do I feel a catch coming on?

Simple explanation – Martin (doesn't use internet) would like me to order some for

him online. How could I refuse?

I trudge home again, even heavier-footed this time, weighed down by the Lead, under the still Leaden sky.

The Cascamite is ordered in a trice – assisted by my procurement manager (she of the bright ideas).

We've digressed. Back to the Lead ... Here's the bit you're waiting for, unless.... WAKE UP!

Here's what this is Leading up to (yes, the pun was deliberate):-

We've now got not only a 12.5kg mud weight, but also enough Lead pipe to cast weights for 2 or 3 small boats (depending how much of the pipe weight is lime-scale).

And all for the princely sum of How much?

Only the time it took to order my friend three times as much of his favourite wood glue as he wanted.

For couple of quid more than he would have paid for 500gm, he'll get a kilo and a half delivered to his door.

Win – Win – Win and WIN! Lockdown is not all bad is it? ●

Paul W





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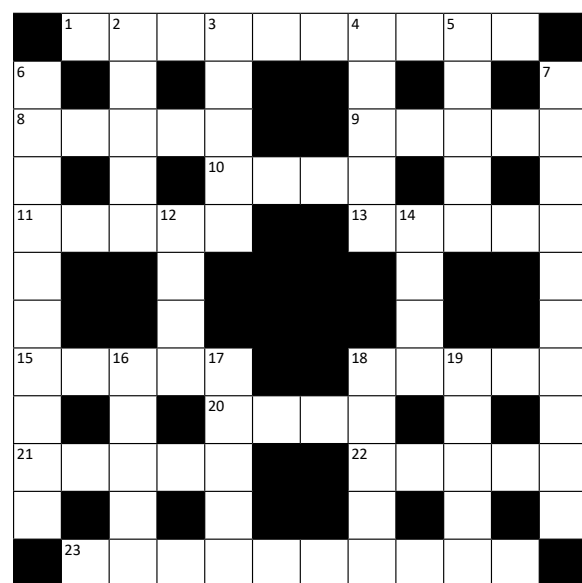
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PUZZLE PAGE 2

By DAVID DUNSTAN

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Back bone noise gains round of applause at pub in village (4,2,4)
- Foe not unknown with article provides relief for bowels (5)
- Crooner with old game of chance (5)
- Some Kiwi fibre provides access to the Internet (4)
- US agency left of the nose (5)
- Topic of article on chronic fatigue syndrome (5)
- Racecourse in Nova Scotia (5)
- Do exceedingly well for T-shirt size, we hear (5)
- Former partner takes morning test (4)
- Song for funeral on furrowed ridge (5)
- Form of transport carrying pound of light emitters (5)
- Embrace hot and cold criminal act for former pharmacist (4,6)

DOWN

- Aides are confused about opinions (5)
- Sketch lake and speak slowly (5)
- Hungary – a piece of tradition (5)
- No French church is a specially coined word (5)
- Everett comes to ground in road in village (10)
- Coe, joyless, excited in cul-de-sac in village (5,5)
- In addition, it's seen in total solidarity (4)
- Henry's love with a kiss – it's a trick! (4)
- An island, cf. our mix-up (5)
- Alien swallowed up by the crazy gnashers (5)
- The queen includes an honour for glowing Ash (5)
- Prison has love for musical instrument (5)

SUDOKU

Grading: Medium

								4
5			2		8	9		
	8	4			3			7
	6	9	3	2			5	
	4						6	
	2			6	7	4	3	
9			4			3	7	
		7	1		5			8
4								

Cryptogram

The following quotation has been encoded using a simple letter substitution. What does it say?

RLGGJRI JAVZMHU MH IUJ HZKAV LY
NGMVH CUL CGMIJ UMHILGP KAE JHHKPH
– VJLGVI JZMLI

Quiz: Oxfordshire

- Which of these counties does **not** border Oxfordshire? Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire.
- The Vale of White Horse district has been part of the administrative county of Oxfordshire since 1974, but what historical county is it part of?
- In what stately home was Winston Churchill born?
- What trade generated a lot of wealth in the Cotswolds from the 13th century onwards?
- What industrial company was founded in Oxford in 1912?
- What Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty stretches north-east from Goring through Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire to Hertfordshire?
- What river rises in Northamptonshire and flows south through Oxfordshire to meet the Thames at Oxford?
- Oxfordshire has two universities: the University of Oxford is one; what is the other?
- What building in Oxford, designed by Christopher Wren, is used for concerts, lectures and university ceremonies?
- Where would you find the River and Rowing Museum?

CORONAVIRUS: GET HELP IF YOU CAN'T PAY HOUSEHOLD BILLS

The arrival of coronavirus in the UK and the threat of infection has emptied streets, confined us in our houses, closed shops and offices and filled hospitals with thousands of patients. So far so bad, but the financial issues have widened the scale of the problem: many of those fortunate enough to remain healthy have suffered a loss of income so drastic that even the paying of essential household bills has become questionable.

However, there are definite steps you can take to tackle these bills. Many banks and utility companies, being keenly aware of people's predicaments, have already reached out to their customers with offers of help. So don't ignore your bills but get in touch with the companies to whom you owe money, or expect to owe money. They might be able to help by redistributing your debts, letting you pay in smaller amounts, over a longer time period, or on a deferred basis.

If you are repaying a mortgage, contact your provider. The government has mooted the idea of a three-month mortgage payment holiday and you might be eligible for it. If you pay rent, contact your landlord to discuss the situation. If you are at risk of being evicted, remember

that since 26 March 2020 the law on evictions has temporarily changed and, for many types of tenancy, eviction notices have to last a minimum of three months.

You might be able to claim benefits, or enhanced benefits if you already receive them. The Citizens Advice website has details: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>

As for Council Tax, if your income has dropped or you are on benefits, you might qualify for reductions. Contact your local district council, using the details on your latest bill.

Get in touch with your gas or electricity supplier, as well as telephone/broadband company. Their help line phone numbers should be on your latest bill. They can tell you whether a special payment plan can be set up.

If you owe income tax, HMRC has a free help line you can ring: 0800 015 9559 (Mon-Fri 8 to 4).

For further information, Citizens Advice Adviceline is always there to help you: 0300 330 9042. (9 to 5pm)

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What you will get out of it

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Ideally we are looking for volunteers to commit to eight hours per week over one or two days. But we can be flexible.

If you are looking for a satisfying and stimulating volunteer role, please contact us at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale/volunteer

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE

Unsurprisingly we are sadly postponing this special event on the 28th June. We hope it may be possible to rearrange this for Sunday 13th September when we will be able to celebrate the end of social isolation as well as 50th Anniversary. If that is not possible we will organise a double celebration in June/July 2021 to celebrate the end of COVID too. Please save the date for September, we will give more information when the situation with Covid-19 becomes clear.

Take care, stay well from the SCHC team.

Coronavirus information

Visit <http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus> or <http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> or the Sonning Common Health Centre website for information and guidance, <http://www.sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk>

The New Window Topic Table

Due to Covid -19 we now have a Window Topic Table, there is information about walks, cycle rides, children's activities and online exercises. There are Takeaway options that also offer vegetable and

fruit baskets. Where to find help from SOCO and Every Mind Matters.

More information can be found on the SCHC website <https://www.sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk/> about AGE UK, FISH and other local support groups.



SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE AGM

Chairman's report



In April last year none of us would have dreamed of the situation in which we found ourselves in late March 2020 (and, of course the situation continues). Hasn't it been uplifting the way people have rallied round to help the less able?

For the magazine it has been another successful year with 6 issues each of 36 pages published and delivered. So again many thanks to Diana, the editorial team, our regular contributors and all the other people involved, around 70 altogether. It was a joy to see so many of them obviously enjoying the cream tea in May 2019 celebrating 45 years of publication.

Your committee try to look ahead and are aware that we are not making as much use of social media as we could. We would like to mount longer and additional articles on our web site (www.sonningcommonmagazine.org) and are contemplating production of a village guide listing the myriad of organisations and services available in the village with their contact details. We think this would be particularly advantageous for new arrivals but also of value to longer established residents. What stops us doing this and more? Simply the lack of people able and prepared to take on the tasks, so if you think these ideas worthwhile and can give some time please volunteer. We would also really like some fresh faces and ideas on the committee.

chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org

Finally my thanks to Kevin, our designer at TenSevenNine, and print agent Rick Peedell, both of whom have connections with the village and provide an excellent service. And an especial thanks to the committee who have provided unrivalled

support throughout the year.

I will finish by wishing you all well at this extraordinary time and sincerely expect to have another good report to present in 2021. ●

Geoffrey Adams

Editor's report



Looking back over the past six issues, from June July 2019 to April May 2020, I am amazed at the variety and interest produced in the articles. There is so much fascinating material it is a challenge to give an overview due to its multiplicity.

The magazine's editorial content is generated in three main ways. The editorial team does commission articles and these have reduced over the last few years as the team has become smaller. The second is the growth in the number of items from our regular contributors and there is a third which are the articles which just appear unsolicited in the editor's in box. These are the most exciting as they are unexpected and cover a very personal view or interests of the contributor.

Commissioned items

These include the profiles of inspiring people in the community who contribute, in a voluntary and exceptional capacity. Usually there is one in every issue. There are also information pieces, such as Neighbourhood Development Plan, 3rd Bridge across the Thames, the work of Highways and Neighbourhood Watch.

Regular contributors

Two new and enlightening contributors have made a large impact. Sue Litchfield with the Health Matters pages and Lyndsay Henderson with Eco SoCo. Plus the puzzle

pages from David Dunstan and Sheila Walker.

Unexpected

These are the ones that really excite me as editor, it is when my inbox receives for example, a poem 'All our yesteryears'; Gardening the Oxford Way; Wild Cats girls' football and VE day celebrations were all such features in the last six issues. They are just so different, add a dimension to the magazine and are always welcome.

The danger of mentioning a few specific features in the magazine inevitably means that many are left out. That should not diminish their contribution as they are very much part of what makes this magazine an enjoyable read and a reflection of our much-valued community. ●

Diana Pearman

Advertising in Difficult Times

The magazine committee is all too aware of the difficulties many of our regular advertisers are currently facing, and we would wish to support them as far as possible in the knowledge they are part of the community enterprise ethos of the magazine.

The committee has therefore offered all our regular advertisers their advert placement in the next two issues for June/July and August/September at no charge. The magazine is a non-commercial community publication and relies on advertising as its main income to finance the design and production costs but also understands that advertisers provide a valuable source of information for our readership and contribute to making the magazine both entertaining and informative. We believe using our limited reserve funding to continue magazine production at this challenging time will benefit all.

However, it is likely that many advertisers will be offering a very limited service until the current restrictions are eased. Readers are advised to contact individual advertisers to check their current operating situation. ●

John Pearman

Advertising Manager

Advertising Manager's Report



As a non-commercial community publication with advertising as the main income stream it is important to continually monitor the level of advertising to ensure that it covers the design and print expenditure.

Reviewing the income derived from advertising over the last six issues I am pleased to report that overall, the advertising revenue exceeded the design and print costs with only one issue falling below the income target required. The average number of advert placements carried in the magazine over the last year has been 63, which has required 11 1/2 to 12 pages of magazine copy in each issue.

Each issue sees new clients making unsolicited contact with the magazine to arrange advertising, either on a single-issue basis, or the preferred annual six issue subscription. Many of these advertisers make mention of the attractive and professional look of the magazine and its interesting content.

During the year we have lost some regular advertisers, a number due to lack of local response to their ads, easily identifiable due to the magazine's clearly defined distribution area. But also, others where the response has almost been too good, and they cannot satisfy their current client waiting list and need to pause their advertising until such time as they can satisfy ongoing demand.

As in previous years it is pleasing to note that many local businesses, which are well known in the locality and probably do not require the exposure, continue their advertising subscriptions with the

magazine from a sense of community support and loyalty rather than any direct cost benefit.

The committee is also aware of the need to extend the advertising base through contacts with selected businesses not currently represented in the magazine. Although it is true to say that the current advertising profile does include an extensive range of trades, professions and general business activities – though we could do with a local chimney sweep!

The committee remain confident as to the advertising revenue, combined with any additional income, supporting the magazine in its current form for the medium-term future. ●

John Pearman

Distribution Manager's Report



2019/20 saw the continuation of bimonthly deliveries of the village magazine to residents of Sonning Common, some adjacent properties in Peppard and businesses in the village. The estate agents, past editors, Henley Standard, Peppard Council and a few others receive the magazine via email and copies can be purchased from the library.

Our print run increased in 2020 to an excess of 2050 copies to enable distribution to the new homes. The twice-yearly FISH newsletter, inserted by our ever-helpful print agent Rick Peedell, is also delivered within the magazine.

Recruiting new deliverers through Sonning Common Facebook groups has

proved very successful this year and we are delighted to welcome new members to the team. Our special thanks to those now stepping down.

By the end of March 2020, Coronavirus lockdown was likely to affect distribution. It was decided to proceed with delivery and to provide disposable gloves for each round of magazines. Approximately two thirds were happy to complete their deliveries as part of their daily exercise. Several people kindly picked up extra rounds and the remainder were covered by the committee so that the challenge could be met.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again, thank those who distribute and deliver the magazines, without whose commitment it would not be viable. ●

Helen Gavin

Treasurer's Short Report



For the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 the Magazine has again made a surplus of income over expenditure. The surplus is £882.00. This is slightly more than last financial year.

The Net Assets of the Magazine show an increase from last year.

No Money had to be used from the Reserve Account. ●

Jill West

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Church news

SPRINGWATER CHURCH

Linsey and her husband, Kevin, arrived at Springwater nearly five years ago from the United States. They had intended to stay for three months, while taking sabbatical leave, but have remained to lead the church, at the request of members.

Although Welsh-born, Linsey and Kevin have lived abroad for much of their married lives, with six years spent in Los Angeles and five in Colorado before returning to the UK. Prior to that they also lived in India for seven years with a few years in the UK in between, working in community development and education in all these places.

The pair co-pastor at Springwater. "It's interesting doing this as a couple," said Linsey. We are both strong characters!"

Kevin and Linsey have noticed, since the Coronavirus outbreak, that more people are connecting with the church on-line than attend the weekly Sunday morning services. People are viewing services at www.springwaterchurch.org.uk

"We are thinking about how we should do things in future at Springwater, post-Coronavirus," said Linsey. "We don't necessarily need to go back to the same

old normal."

One thing is for certain – it will no doubt be a creative approach to fulfilling the church's aims in future.

In normal times, and unusually for a church, Springwater has a Steering Wheel Fellowship group for individuals to meet once a month for curry and beer to share lives, faith and an interest in classic cars.

Compassionate Loaf hosts bread-making sessions, workshops and sales at the church, the proceeds of which support local charities. Toddler group, The Ark, meets every Wednesday morning and there is usually a Senior Citizens Keep Fit class on a Thursday.

For more information on the food bank and any Springwater activities phone 0118 972 4519 or email contactspringwater@gmail.com

KIDMORE END AND CHRIST THE KING

Eastertide lasts all the way up to Whitsun (Pentecost) at the very end of May, and so I can still say: a very Happy Easter to you! Truly we have just had an Easter unlike any other. In common with the rest of the

Church of England, Christ the King, St John the Baptist Kidmore End and All Saints' Peppard are closed to all until further notice. In addition, the local churches weren't able to have our Good Friday Walk of Witness through Sonning Common because of social distancing rules.

In these difficult times, do contact me if you would like prayer or other support: 0118 972 1459. In addition, every week a church bulletin is sent out via e-mail, which includes prayer resources for use at home. Please let me know if you would like to be sent this.

A prayer for Sonning Common:

Lord, we pray that you would bless all who live in our village, of all faiths and none. We give you thanks for all the different ways in which people are helping one another and looking out for their neighbours. We remember those who are sick, fearful, or lonely and ask that you would help us reassure them of your love. Finally, we ask that you would fill us all with hope and strengthen us to get through this difficult time. Amen.

Reverend James Stickings
Rector

PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 28

1. Worcestershire
(Oxfordshire is bordered by
6 counties: Warwickshire,
Northamptonshire, Bucking-
shire and Gloucestershire)
2. Berkshire
3. Blenheim Palace
4. Wool
5. Morris Motors
6. Chilterns
7. Cherwell
8. Oxford Brookes University
9. Sheldonian Theatre
10. Henley

Quiz: Oxfordshire

CORRECT ENGLISH IS THE SLANG
OF PRIGS WHO WRITE HISTORY
AND ESSAYS – GEORGE ELIOT

Cryptogram

4	5	8	7	3	2	1	9	6
6	3	7	1	9	5	2	4	8
9	1	2	4	8	6	3	7	5
8	2	1	5	6	7	4	3	9
3	4	5	8	1	9	7	6	2
7	6	9	3	2	4	8	5	1
1	8	4	9	5	3	6	2	7
5	7	6	2	4	8	9	1	3
2	9	3	6	7	1	5	8	4

Sudoku

N	O	S	R	A	C	H	U	H	
E	L	E	T	F					S
S	B	U	L	B	E	R	G	E	D
O	E	X	A	M	E	O			N
L	C	E	X		T	O	C	A	S
C		A				S			L
Y	O				L				Y
E	C	H	E	T	I	A	S	A	N
S									N
O	B	I	N	G					E
J	O	A			R	D			K
N	A								B

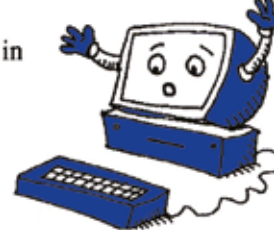
Cryptic crossword

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